

April 1934

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Official Organ Happy Hours Brotherhood

DEADWOOD DICK IN CONGRESS :

DIME NOVEL IS PUT WITH RARE BOOKS IN THE CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY. Reprinted per permission from Philadelphia Record of January 9th, 1934.

"DEADWOOD DICK" of dime novel fame, has just made his proudest redskin "leap in the air and bite the dust". And may the kindly shades keep him from knowing it was his charm and not one of his deadly bullets that did the deed. He is being installed with all his yellow-backed pals on the sacred shelves of the rare book room in the Library of Congress. And just one generation ago he saw his devotees tracking the trail to the woodshed, followed by an irate father grasping the family switch. Dick and his pals fared forth offering their adventures for a dime, and, like everything that comes too easily to humans, he was thrown away so carelessly that he has almost disappeared from the American scene.

Expensive Gentleman.

So he became "rare". Startled historians discovered the dime novel holds much that is authentic about pioneer days. The Library of Congress began to want Deadwood Dick and his pals. But Dick has become an expensive gentleman in recent years. Then the files of the copyright department had to be renovated for removal into the new Archives building. V. Valta Parma, director of the rare book room, decided to explore, and there he found Dick. Scooping up the dusty yellow books, he saved them from "a fate worse than death---The

ignominy of the furnace. The dime novel, Parma explains, made its debut under the sponsorship of Erastus Beadle, of New York, in 1850.

Had to Sneak In.

But somehow, parents thought their children should be reading Shakespeare or Emerson. "Deadwood Dick" and his energetic gal, "Calamity Jane", had to sneak into the house. Certainly the dime novel could not be criticized on grounds of morality. The dime novel girls didn't even "stretch their legs". They eased their limbs. They remained true to their own true loves, and were always properly clothed". Now gray-haired men can revive the dear dead days by walking unashamed thru the majestic portals of the Library of Congress and demanding the little yellow-back with the magnificent boast that reads: "I'm Mustang Sam, the high Muck-a-muck of E. Pluribus Unum. I can yell louder, run furdur, ride faster, shoot straighter, jump higher, tell bigger lies, eat more bull and jump outside more chained lightning than any other two-legged critter as was ever pupped."

HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD

For some years now there has been a very active group of dime-novel lovers. It is called the Happy Hours Brotherhood, and the membership attempts to keep alive and circulating the joys of their childhoods. Robert H. Smeltzer of Philadelphia, Vice President, will defend his hobby and expound on the virtues of the thriller in the most glowing terms and on the slightest pretext. Recently he said: "When I was a farm boy I used to read my favorite dime novels in the wagon-house loft on in the hay mow on rainy days. I never neglected the chores for the stories, nor did I read them in school. I never got banned in the old woodshed for

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reading them, but my grandma and my aunts did class them as trash, pure and simple, and I had to read them when I was out of their sight.

BECAME COLLECTOR

"I never thought the paper-backs had any value. I lost track of many of them and began to believe that I would never see any of my old favorites again. However, one day about 13 years ago I received an inquiry from another enthusiast about a certain book he wanted. I went on the trail for it, and from that day to this I have been collecting and exchanging them." The 60 Happy Hours members, scattered from coast to coast, exchange professional comments and items, and constitute the backbone of the dime-novel brotherhood in this country. The brotherhood lists as honorary members; Diamond Dick of Nebraska; Pawnee Bill of Oklahoma; Irvin S. Cobb, the author, and Gilbert Patten, who is the Burt L. Standish of the Frank Merriwell stories.

REALLY 5 CENT WEEKLY

The dime novel is in reality a five-cent weekly, which contains a boy's story, is paper-covered and runs from 32 to 100 pages. Beadle, DeWitt, Munro and Richmond were the most popular publishers in the early days of the last century. Their titles were both eloquent and gripping.-Antelope Abe, the Boy Guide-The Ocean Rovers-King of the Plains-Red Men of the Woods-Forest Lodge-Big Rifle-Ochomoo, the Huron-The Shawnee's Foe-and Rattlesnake Dick. Later there was the Black and White Era, so-called because the covers were then printed only in those colors. The favorites of that era were: OLD Sleuth-Old Cap Collier-Frank Reade-and Little Chief.

ERA OF FLAMING COLORS

Then came the most glorious day of the thrillers career-the Colored Era-when the

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covers were in flaming colors and the contents exciting beyond compare. The stars of this golden age were the James Boys, Buffalo Bill, Nick Carter, Pluck and Luck, Work and Win, and Diamond Dick.

NOTE: The above action by the U.S. Government should add impetus to dime novel collecting.

It is emphatic evidence that the little paper-covered novels are coming into their own; receiving their due recognition; hence, enhanced values.

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NEXT NO.; "RECKLESS RALPH TRACKS 'EM DOWN!"

(This is a REPRINT of the Original Issue, which also contained a partial list of the 1934 members as well as advertisements of the following:

PATRICK MULHALL-Castlecomer-County Kilkenny,
Ireland.

L.C.SKINNER-36 Chaplin St., Pawtucket, R.I.

AMERICAN DIME NOVEL EXCHANGE-N.Y.CITY.N.Y.

VALLEY DIME BOOK CO...Fisherville, Mass.

ROBERT H.SMELTZER, 3432 N.Bodine-Phila., Pa.

GEORGE FRENCH, 121 W.Passaic Av, Bloomfield,

In addition to these advertisers, N.J.

GEORGE N. BECK, 2114 Scott St., Davenport, Ia.

had a FULL-PAGE Ad listing For Sale:

THRILLERS OF YESTERDAY including Ornums-

Beadles-Cap Colliers-N.Y.Detectives-Log

Cabins-Pluck & Luck-British Beadles-Brave &

Bolds-Western Weekly-Wide Awake Weekly-War

Library Pockets-Boys Best Weekly Pockets-

Seaside-Munro's-DeWitts-Frank Leslie's Boys

& Girls Weekly-and Story Papers such as:

N.Y.Ledger-Chicago Ledgers-Harpers Young

People-Youth's Companion-Golden Days-N.Y.

Weekly-Fireside Companion-Etc.